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LONELY PERCH—The North Light keeps vigil on a rainy, purple-flag day here on Block Island. The weather went from balmy to blustery pretty quickly, and it now feels like winter. PHOTO BY LARS TROSDON

New ownership for The Block Island Times

By Fraser and Betty Lang

When we became publishers of The Block Island Times a decade ago we accepted a challenging job as well as a public trust. We now relinquish our responsibilities grateful for the sustaining support of the community and confident that the The Block Island Times will prosper under the new ownership.



Michael Schroeder.

We are thankful for loyal subscribers and a steady base of newsstand customers that validate the weekly effort to produce the paper. It is always heartening to deliver the new edition on Friday morning and find expectant readers already in line. Virtually every island

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CRMC seeking public input

By Renée Meyer

The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) and BeachSAMP have announced that public comments can be made on the introductory chapter of the new Shoreline Change Special Area Management Plan through Sunday, Jan. 31.

According to the BeachSAMP website: "SAMP, which the CRMC is authorized to develop under the CZMA (U.S. Coastal Zone Management Act), are comprehensive plans providing for natural resource protection and reasonable coastal-dependant economic growth set forth in policies that are tailor-made to a certain area of the state."

BeachSAMP is a collaborative effort involving not only the CRMC,

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Top stories of 2015

By Cassius Shuman

In wrapping up 2015, The Block Island Times took a look back at some of the notable stories that were covered in the news this past year.

Clearly, the top news story of the year was the fact that the Block Island Wind Farm project finally started construction. After multiple delays, and amid a fair amount of controversy, the first-ever off-shore wind farm completed its first phase in November. Installation of National Grid's sea2shore transmission cable is expected to begin in January.

The Town Council and Town Manager Nancy Dodge had a plate full of challenging issues to wrestle with in 2015. Twelve months into the Council's tenure, the Council was confronted with the task of filling a vacant seat. After four 2-2 votes on nominations, the Town Council selected

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DON'T DO THIS!—A walk along the beach on the morning of Dec. 25 found this unpleasant surprise. Someone obviously tried to drive over the dunes from the beach side. You're not supposed to walk on the dunes, never mind drive over them. They are protected. PHOTO BY RENEE MEYER

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

A promise to keep

Block Island is beautiful. From the miles of beaches to its graceful hills, to the residents who care so much for their little slice of heaven and work to maintain it, to the summer crowd that enthusiastically (and, mostly, respectfully) takes advantage of its natural beauty and supports it economically, we see what most of you have seen for years: A place we can serve and call our own.

We're here to help the island move forward so that it can hold onto the past. As we say in the masthead of our Central Connecticut publications, "It takes a newspaper to build a community." We truly believe that a good, dependable paper (and website) is the foundation of a real community.

We want to continue the legacy of its outgoing owners, Fraser and Betty Lang, who showed their commitment to the island each week. We're fortunate they have agreed to stay on to help us get acclimated and to build on their dream. The staff will remain, and we're confident they will continue to produce the quality work you deserve.

We're an independent company, and the buck stops at my door. There's no connection to anyone or any thing. Our only commitment is to the communities we serve. This transition has been months in the making. Our promise to you is to provide truthful, objective reporting and quality editing.

As much as we'll work to avoid them, we will make mistakes. We hope that they will be small and few. We also hope that you will forgive us when we bend over backward to fix them.

You'll be seeing a lot of me around the island — I'm not used to spending a lot of time behind a desk — and you should feel free to ask questions and give me your opinion. I'll be here often, especially during this transition time. Stop me on the street, come into the office, or speak up at one of the many meetings we have planned to introduce me to you.

Just like the paper under the Langs, we'll do our best to provide truthful, unbiased reporting in our news columns. Don't expect to see much change in the editorial direction of the paper. We believe in the same things most of you do: protection of the island's natural wonders, quality healthcare, affordable energy, good education for our children, job opportunities for those who can work and meeting the basic needs of those who can't, and careful, thoughtful economic development to sustain both young and old, rich and poor.

We may disagree on how to get there, but we'll encourage debate and provide reasoned suggestions on how to move forward. Most importantly, we'll listen. The door is open, cell phone and email available to all.

But don't take our word for it — we know we need to earn your trust. We won't always be right, and we will make mistakes. But we hope you'll forgive us when we admit them, seeing that we will learn from them and because you will know our hearts are in the right place.

We have come to understand that Block Island is not simply a place where people live and work and play. It inspires a passion and devotion seldom found anywhere.

Here's to supporting each other in this special community.

Michael Schroeder
Publisher

To the Editor:

I know it's the Christmas season and I should resist writing this letter to the editor, but wow! Talk about the pot calling the kettle black. You'd think that the mean-spirited writer Peter Wood, a former newspaperman, would be defending the First Amendment constitutional rights of Everett Littlefield and John Willis rather than vilifying them for expressing their points of view. Mr. Wood, master of hypocrisy, not just this letter to the editor (*The Block Island Times*, Dec. 19), but in the past, whole columns in which he felt free to criticize the former governor for downing three free "lobsta rolls" at a sitting and commenting on the "bulging waistslines of the American Legion Honor Guard serving at a ceremony to honor the Governor's visit."

Yet he would deign to censor other writers' opinions — chastising the editor for publishing their points of view rather than defending their rights to express their views of reality.

Everyone should get in lockstep with Peter and not oppose those who have desecrated our viewshed here on the island with the help of Deepwater, or those who promise us "free cable to the mainland" and lower electric rates, or those who would give us the same distribution system

and an eyecore at the base of our beautiful island.

But we're not supposed to complain because it's for the "greater good."

Mr. Wood goes on to criticize Everett's defense of the Second Amendment to the Constitution.

Mr. Wood, you have managed to put your foot in your mouth not once, but three times by criticizing those who take the time to express their points of view in this public forum and to protest the liberal agenda and then suggest the censoring of their opinions. Talk about "politically incorrect."

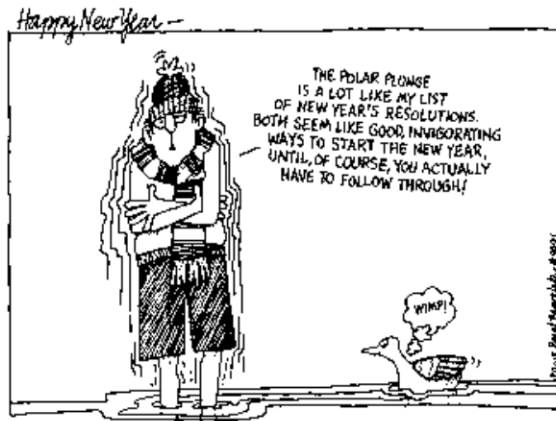
Surely you are pulling our leg.

John Hopf
Lakeside Drive

To The Editor:

Sigh — where do I begin? In Mr. Wood's rather personal call outs (*The Block Island Times*, Dec. 19), he uses the words paranoia, insane, rant, vicious, smear, writers' wrath, and finally, "damage to the shooter himself when he signs his name to the trash he writes!"

Well, now, I also went to Mr. Wikipedia to see just what this disease I have was all about. Anxiety, fear, irrationality, delusion? Nope! None of those fit. What drives me is the abso-



lute certainty that the so-called leaders of this country are steering us down a road from which we will never recover. Please explain to me how a 19 trillion dollar national debt can be paid down by continuing to print and spend money, worthless paper, that is being undermined on a daily basis! Hmm? Can you do that?

While his choice of words in the beginning of the diatribe were enough to stir my ire just a bit, and calling my letter trash kind of added to it, I just consider the source from which they emanate. But with the last verbal smear he appears to have gone a little too far. Was he, Mr. East Coast elite, trying to infer that I am, or would/could be a shooter of innocent people? Pretty damn base of a person to say that about anyone! But from that person I would expect no less.

He cites my rant and at the end of the sentence, and the period, he then goes after Mr. Willis with a righteous vengeance for his alleged misconduct. Just what was it he was citing about my "rant" that so incensed him that he completely lost his train of thought? Or was it that I was/am in possession of a paranoid personality? Who knows? Who cares?

When Mr. Wood calls out the present management of *The Block Island Times* for allowing Dr. Willis's and my missives to be printed, it appears that his memory banks have apparently completely forgotten about all his own journalistic malfeasance while he was the editor of this self same paper. When he came across something in a letter that he perceived to not be up to his standards of the liberal/progressive/elitist mores of the times, he would change or leave them out. Ask me how I know this.

I guess I am just a rabid Constitutional at heart. I still believe in what the founders of this country did for us, and all the generations coming forward from their time. I have no interest in putting forward any of the beliefs of the Cloward-Piven, Saul Alinsky, politically correct, multicultural, liberal, progressive ilk, nor any other of their ideas to bring this country to its knees. This is the greatest Republic, *née* democracy, this planet has ever seen, or will have seen, after they finish destroying it!

Mr. Wood has been a thorn in my, er, side since he arrived here on Block Island. I would ask of him to return to his ivory-towered elitist conclave over there in Portsmouth/Newport. From there, he can pontificate on the ills of, and beliefs of, all we misbegotten hicks, and just leave us to fend for ourselves without his tortured input (i.e. "Pass a law that would prevent paranoid people from expressing themselves publicly...") Not a true supporter of the First Amendment, I see, nor any of the others, apparently! Get thee hence, sir!

Respectfully submitted, without prejudice or ill will. I remain, your oh so humble servant.

Everett R. Littlefield
Looning time resident

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New owner

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business has advertised at one time or another. Many businesses place space and classified ads week after week and month after month. Advertising provides ninety percent of our revenue. There would be no newspaper without those advertisers and we are ever grateful for their support.

We are the fifth owners of *The Block Island Times*, the beneficiaries of the hard work and dedication of those who came before us and established a viable publishing enterprise. To sustain and nurture this organization will require effective leadership.

We are confident that the new owner, Michael Schroeder, has the vision, resources and experience to take the helm. We are pleased that his wife Janet will also play a role in the day-to-day management. They offer decades of business experience. Most importantly, they exhibit in their employment and volunteer work, a commitment to the community and its betterment.

Michael Schroeder is a 35-year veteran of the publishing world with an impressive resume of positions. He purchased *The Bristol Press* and *New Britain Herald*, along with three Connecticut weeklies, in 2009. He was instrumental in the creation of *amNewYork*, the largest-circulation daily in Manhattan, and was publisher and chief operating officer of 365 Media USA, which produced the free daily *BostonNOW*. He is also a Director and Treasurer of the New England Newspaper and Press Association.

He has been an editor and general manager in newspaper and magazine publishing since 1980. He has worked

at *Newsday*, *InfoWorld* and *Davies Media Group, LLC*. He has worked on both coasts as an editor, production and technology manager, and publisher. When we learned that the tagline on their *New Britain* and *Bristol* publications was "It takes a newspaper to build a community" we knew that they shared our goals. Michael will be introducing himself to our readers in the coming days. Stay tuned.

We are pleased to accept Michael's invitation to continue involvement with *The Block Island Times* for the foreseeable future. We look forward to working with him to explore new initiatives in print and on the web. We will explore additional ways to serve the business community and ensure its success.

We are heartened that the staff of the current enterprise will be retained and we express our deep appreciation to those who work with us now and have done so over the last ten years. These are people who have been committed to a relentless search for the stories and information that serve the needs of the Block Island community. It is a job that often requires going "above and beyond" and committing to long hours and the pressures of countless deadlines. We thank our current and past employees.

We enter a new chapter of our lives grateful for the opportunity to have served as the publishers of the newspaper in this community that we cherish. Our goal has always been to deliver objective journalism and a forum for community discussion. This is a public trust as well as a job. Thanks to everyone for your friendship and support.

And welcome to Janet and Michael Schroeder with best wishes for their success.

CRMC

Continued from Page 1

but many departments at the University of Rhode Island, Roger Williams Law School's Marine Affairs Institute, the Rhode Island Sea Grant Legal Program, and Eastern Connecticut State University.

Block Island has benefitted by the involvement of Eastern Connecticut State through the involvement of Assistant Professor of Environmental Geosciences Bryan Oakley. Oakley has been studying shoreline change on Block Island and has a dedicated group of local volunteers who are measuring beach profiles in several areas of the island, once a month, using the "modified Emory method," colloquially known as "two sticks and a string."

Throughout the fall, the CRMC and BeachSAMP have led municipal workshops in several coastal communities, including Block Island. That meeting was held on October 22, 2015, and was attended by many in the community, who showed concern about the effects rising sea levels will have on the resources and infrastructure of the island.

According to the introduction, and using Newport as an example: "Relative sea level rise in Rhode Island measured more than four millimeters per year between 1983 and 2009 (Carey et al. 2015). The highest NOAA projections for Newport, Rhode Island suggest that by 2100 sea levels may rise as much as seven feet above 1990 levels."

Large storms give a glimpse as to the impact of sea level rise and the effect it may have on the shoreline, and Superstorm Sandy has spurred the CRMC to be proactive in helping communities to build resiliency into their coastlines.

Sandy caused a lot of damage, with very little actual rainfall, but days of storm surge. On Block Island, major damage was done to Corn Neck Road and Spring Street. In the "Statement of the Problem" section of the introduction it is written: "However, despite the damage caused, this storm wasn't

a hurricane or even a once in one hundred year (one percent annual chance) storm event when it made landfall in Rhode Island, rather it was a once in 25-year storm (four percent annual chance) event for Westerly, and a much less intense storm event for the rest of the state. Had this storm been a hurricane or a one percent annual chance storm event, impacts would have (been) much greater."

Wetlands, which the Shoreline Change SAMP says are "drowning in place," are especially vulnerable to sea level rise. "Permanent flooding of Rhode Island's wetlands is already occurring, as these wetlands cannot gain sufficient elevation to keep up with sea level rise. This trend will continue into the future causing significant loss of habitat for fish, shellfish, birds, and other wildlife, and recreation areas. The loss of coastal wetlands also means a loss of the protection they provide to coastal communities as an important natural barrier to storm surge."

Although only the introductory chapter for the SAMP is up for public viewing and comment, the entire SAMP will be comprised of two volumes. Volume Two will contain technical reports and a list of CRMC regulatory changes. Besides the introduction, Volume One will have seven additional chapters, some of which will contain guidance for planning by municipalities. Chapter seven is titled: "Adaptation Strategies and Techniques."

The Shoreline Change SAMP will not be set in stone, or even be a regulatory document. It is anticipated that it will be reviewed and updated frequently. "The intended audience for this SAMP, in addition to CRMC members and staff, are decision makers, planners, boards and commissions in Rhode Island's 21 coastal communities who are principally responsible for coping with the impacts of storms, coastal erosion, and sea level rise."

To read the full 13-page introductory chapter, and to weigh in with comments, go to www.beachSAMP.org. Again, the window for comments closes on Jan. 31.

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